

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1340

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SUBJ: VISIT TO VENEZUELA OF COSTA RICAN PRESIDENT ODUBER

REF: CARACAS 13268(NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENT ODUBER, WHO VISITED HERE DECEMBER 18-19, IN APRESS CONFERENCE SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE GAVE AS THE PURPOSE OF HIS TRIP A REVIEW OF THE DECEMBER 1974 FINANCIAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES. HE SAID VENEZUELAN-FINANCED REFINERY IN COSTA RICA IS NOT IMMEDIATELY FEASIBLE. HE DESCRIBED THE RECENT PARIS CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION AS A VICTORY FOR THE THIRD WORLD, SINCE THE GREAT POWERS HAD FAILED TO DISRUPT IT BY WINNING TO THEIR SIDE THE SMALL NON-PRODUCERS OF PETROLEUM, AND BECAUSE THE OIL-EXPORTING AND THE LESSER DEVELOPED CONSUMING COUNTRIES HAD SAT DOWN TOGETHER AS EQUALS. HE SAID THE VENEZUE- LANS, AS PRINCIPAL ACTORS AT THE PARIS CONFERENCE, HAD NOT REALIZED ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE SMALL CONSUMING COUTRIES.

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ODUBER ALSO BRIEFLY TOUCHED ON HIS COUNTRY'S RELATIONS WITH CUBA,

CHILE, AND PANAMA. END SUMMARY.

2. BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FROM VENEZUELA ON DECEMBER 19 PRESIDENT ODUBER OF COSTA RICA HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE WHOSE HIGHLIGHTS WERE REPORTED IN THE PRESS AS FOLLOWS:

A. PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT.-TO REVIEW AND EVALUATE THE AGREEMENTS MADE IN DECEMBER 1974 BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES AT PUERTO ORDAZ CONCERNING THE FINANCING OF PETROLEUM PURCHASES. ODUBER DESCRIBED THE AGREEMENT NOT AS AID, BUT AS A "FINANCIAL OPERATION BETWEEN VENEZUELA WHICH IS LEADING AND WE WHO ACCEPT THE LOAN AND NEGOTIATE IT." ODUBER ALSO SAID THAT OF ALL CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES HONDURAS NEEDS LOANS MOST, AND THAT "ANY AID VENEZUELA GIVES TO HONDURAS COSTA RICA WILL ACCEPT AS AID TO COSTA RICA."

B. OIL REFINERY IN COSTA RICA-ODUBER STATED THAT A COSTA RICAN-VENEZUELAN JOINT COMMITTEE HAD BEEN STUDYING THE POSSIBILITY OF BUILDING A REFINERY POSSIBLE WITH PARTICIPATION BY ECUADOR AND A MIDDLE EAST COUNTRY, TO REFINER CRUDE FROM THOSE COUNTRIES TO COMPETE IN THE PACIFIC MARKET. HE SAID THAT BECAUSE VENEZUELA IS CUTTING BACK ON EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE THE PROJECT IS NOT FEASIBLE "IN THE SHORT TERM".

C. MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION DECLARED ODUBER, "I BELIEVE YOU VENEZUELANS DO NOT SEE THE GREAT IMPORTANCE WHICH THE WORLD HAS GIVEN TO THE HOLDING OF THIS MEETING...BECAUSE YOU ARE THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS IN THIS WHOLE SITUATION CREATED SINCE THE OPEC COUNTRIES DECIDED TO ADJUST THE PRICES OF THEIR PRODUCTS." ODUBER RECALLED THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ'S LETTER ON ENERGY TO PRESIDENT FORD IN SEPTEMBER 1974 HAD "PROVOKED INTERNATIONAL TENSION", BUT THAT "LAST NIGHT (DECEMBER 18) SIGNIFIED OPEC'S BEST-KNOWN AND MOST SPECTACULAR TRIUMPH--THAT THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EXPORTING AND OF THE LESS DEVELOPED CONSUMING COUNTRIES COULD SIT DOWN AT THE SAME TABLE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF EQUALITY." ODUBER WENT ON TO SAY THAT THIS "FOR ME MARKS THE END OF THE FIRST STAGE OF TENSION BETWEEN THE OPEC AND THE PURCHASING COUNTRIES, THE WORLD POWERS." ODUBER SAID COSTA RICA HAD ALWAYS MAINTAINED SOLIDARITY WITH OPEC. HE MAINTAINED THAT THE US UNCLASSIFIED

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AND OTHER GREAT POWERS HAD FINALLY UNDERSTOOD THE "NEW REALITY," AND THAT "THE GREAT POWERS BELIEVED THAT THEY COULD GET ON THEIR SIDE THE NON-PRODUCERS OF PETROLEUM IN ORDER TO DISRUPT THE THIRD WORLD, BUT IT DID NOT TURN OUT THAT WAY."

D. US POSITION AT PARIS CONFERENCE-ODUBER STATED THAT "IF WE WERE TO JUDGE SECRETARY KISSINGER ONLY BY HIS PRESS STATEMENTS I WOULD SAY THEY WERE UNFORTUNATE BUT PERHAPS NECESS-

ARY IN ORDER FOR HIM TO SAVE FACE BEFORE HIS COUNTRY...MY
IMPRESSION IS THAT THE FACT THAT THEY ALL SAT DOWN TO NEGOTIATE
IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HIS PRESS STATEMENTS."

E. CUBA-ODUBER SAID THE GOCR IS TALKING TO CUBAN REPRESENTATIVES "IN ORDER TO GO GRADUALLY TOWARDS NORMALIZATION OF COMMERCIAL AND CONSULAR RELATIONS FIRST. AT AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT WE WILL DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS."

F. CHILE-ODUBER SAID THE GOCR COULD NOT BREAK RELATIONS WITH CHILE BECAUSE PASCUAL ALLENDE AND HIS COMPANION ARE IN ASYLUM IN THE COSTA RICAN EMBASSY IN SANTIAGO, AND A BREAK WOULD FORCE THE CLOSING OF THE EMBASSY. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE GOC WOULD RESPECT THE INTERNATIONAL RULES OF ASYLUM AND SOON LET ALLENDE AND HIS COMPANION DEPART FOR COSTA RICA.

3. ODUBER SAID HE WAS PROCEEDING TO PANAMA TO SEE GENERAL TORRIJOS. "WE ARE PERMANENTLY WORRIED ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND PANAMA ABOUT THE CANAL. I HOPE THAT GRADUALLY THE US WILL REACH THE CONCLUSION THAT IT IS OBLIGED TO ACCEPT PANAMANIAN PROPOSALS." HE ADDED THAT PRESIDENTS PEREZ AND LOPEZ AND HIMSELF, TOGETHER WITH TORRIJOS, ARE ORGANIZING THE CHIEFS OF STATE MEETING IN PANAMA NEXT JUNE, AND THAT THIS SUPPORT OF PANAMA "HAS GREAT IMPORTANCE WITH RESPECT TO THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS."

4. COMMENT. ODUBER, AS A GOOD GUEST, WAS AT PAINS TO PLEASE AND FLATTER HIS HOSTS.

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